

The Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association speaks in favor of HB 4163 regarding elimination of smoking in public places. The Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association has a long standing policy regarding smoking. Policy from 11-98 reads: "The Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association promotes the dental hygienist in prevention and cessation of tobacco usage education and therefore opposes the marketing and distribution of tobacco products and promotional look-alike products." More recent policy, 2-05 reads: "The Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association advocates tobacco-free environment in all public facilities."

As clinicians we know that smoking is linked to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, low birth weight and many other diseases. As prevention professionals we know tobacco in any form, including "chew" is extremely detrimental to the oral cavity and the whole body. We know that mucous membranes absorb tobacco and those in the oral cavity are particularly open to assault. Many times we see the beginning of oral cancer in smoker's mouths and counsel them accordingly. We believe firmly that second hand smoke can be more deadly than first hand smoke and therefore endangers anyone exposed, particularly children whose bodies are not fully developed and can be especially harmed.

We have advocated for change in many ways-supporting non-smoking legislation, having MDHA members sit on the Tobacco Coalition and the American Lung Association Boards, where we advocated for a system whereby medical personnel can easily recognize there is a smoker in the home of a child, having MDHA volunteers speak to school children of all ages and many other avenues to halt the effects of this habit. We know many businesses have opted to eliminate smoking and we applaud them, however this is not, in our view, something that is anyone's "right" even as a business owner. No business owner has the right to impose a health risk on others. The argument that if you don't like the establishment because of its' smoking policy you don't have to frequent it is not the same as if you don't like the violent program on TV and can turn it off. The effects of smoking are devastating and preventable and we believe it is time Michigan joined those many states who have outlawed this deadly practice as much as possible. We support passage of HB 4163.

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